4-HOUR HUDDLE

Bus Boycott Conference Fails To Find Solution

By TOM JOHNSON

Montgomery Negroes will continue to boycott city buses until a "satisfactory" seating arrangement is devised, a spokesman told officials of City Bus Lines yesterday.

The Rev. M. L. King, speaking for a delegation that conferred with bus lines officials four hours, proposed that bus patrons be seated on a "first come—first served" basis with no sections reserved for either race.

Negroes would continue to seat from the rear and whites from the front, he said, but there would be no reassignment of seats once the buses were loaded.

2 OTHER CONDITIONS

He laid down two other conditions sought by Negroes: More courteous treatment and the hiring of Negro drivers on routes "predominantly" Negro.

On all but the "courtesy" proposal, Atty. Jack Crenshaw, counsel for the bus lines, demurred.

He said it would be impossible to accept the proposed seating arrangement "in view of the segregation law" and, he added, the company has no intentions of hiring Negro drivers.

"We do not contemplate and have no intentions of hiring Negro drivers," said Crenshaw. "The time is not right in Montgomery, but who can say what will happen in 10 years."

One of the delegation replied: "We don't mean 10 years we mean this year."

King, who is pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, emphasized the group was not trying to change the segregation law.

BETTER ACCOMMODATIONS

"We are merely trying to peacefully obtain better accommodations for Negroes," he said.

Commenting on reports of violence, King said most of his race deplores such acts as much as anyone and promised to report "anyone we know to be guilty."

But, he added, the boycott will continue "until something is done."

J. H. Bagley, manager of the bus line, was asked if this statement would cause the company to reduce its service immediately. He replied

"We will continue to provide service adequate to the public needs."

He added that service has already been curtailed on some routes but declined to name them.

A Negro attorney, Fred D. Gray, questioned whether the state law applied to city bus lines and urged that a ruling be obtained from the attorney general.

Mayor W. A. Gayle later said the City Commission had not decided whether to seek the ruling.

Crenshaw told the protesting delegation the bus company would do everything possible to serve its passengers but could not "change the law."

He said the company would mark every other bus "special" on the Washington Park-South Jackson Street runs and transport only Negroes. They could still use the regular buses which run at seven and one-half minute intervals.

The boycott grew out of the arrest last week of Rosa Parks a seamstress who refused to move to the rear of a crowded city bus. She was fined $14 in Recorder's Court.

Several instances of violence have been reported.

Four city buses have been fired on. But Police Chief G. J. Ruppenthal said there was "no evidence to date" of any connection between the incidents and the boycott.

Two Negro houses including the home of Policeman A. G. Worthy, were hit by shotgun blasts Wednesday night but no one was reported hurt.

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